

Southport.—The foundation-stone of the new town-hall of this new and thriving place was laid on 20th ult. The plans were prepared by Mr. Thomas Withnell, of this town, architect. The new building will be of brick, the basement being coated with Portland cement. The extreme length will be about 120 feet, breadth 52 feet (exclusive of porch); height of building 42 feet; and of wings, 36 feet. The ground-story is occupied by the police department, cells, kitchens, &c. On entering the building from the front, a hall appears, at the rear of which is the magistrates' retiring room: on the right hand is the sessions room, 35 by 32 feet; with offices for the magistrates' clerks, waiting-room for witnesses, &c.; on the left, the board room, for the commissioners' meetings, 19 feet 9 inches by 33 feet; two committee rooms, respectively 14 feet by 14 feet 3 inches, and 14 feet by 14 feet 6 inches; and private and public offices for the law clerk. The whole of these apartments are 14 feet high. Access is obtained to the upper story by a double flight of steps, and here is a room for public meetings, &c. 71 feet by 33 feet, and ante-room 14 feet by 33 feet, and 15 feet high. Over the entrance in the right wing will be inscribed, "Police Station;" and on the left, "Victoria Market;" it being part of the plan to remove or erect another market in the rear of the new building. The contractor for the works is Mr. Thomas Stanley, of this town. The sum contracted for is £2,400.

Bradford.—In the town council, lately, a resolution was moved ordering a new map and survey of the borough, the General Purposes Committee to advertise for tenders, and select one or more for the adoption of the council. It was proposed to get respectable professional men in a circuit of some twenty miles to compete for the undertaking, and as it was found the Act required the council to advertise, the resolution was passed, on the understanding that the town clerk should seek by letter the competition of a certain number of well-known gentlemen, on the assumption that the lowest tender will not be accepted.—On a motion that the local gas company's tender for street lights, at the rate of 2s. 8s. a lamp, be accepted, there was some grumbling and threats of supporting a new company, as the old refused to extend the lighting into the outskirts on the terms offered.

Leeds.—The Leeds Post-office, says the local *Intelligencer*, has at length assumed something of the outward aspect of a public building, and is now distinguishable from the plain brick warehouses with which it is connected. As much has been done in the way of architectural adornment as the situation would permit. The dull brick front has been transformed, through the medium of cement, into an architectural and decorated façade (designed by Mr. W. R. Corson, architect). Some designs in colour, intended to enhance their effect, have yet to be introduced. Mr. Corson's designs have been executed by Mr. Charles, plasterer.—On Wednesday in last week, a special general meeting of the Improvement Commissioners was held, for the purpose of considering the propriety of adopting the "Labouring Classes Lodging-house Act, 1851, of exercising its powers, and the propriety of erecting, renting, purchasing, or establishing one or more buildings to be used as public lodging-houses for the labouring classes, in connection with the Improvement Act." It was shown that as a pecuniary speculation it might be made very advantageous, besides the great benefit which would be derived to society by the establishment of cleanly, healthy, and well regulated houses of this description, in the place of those which now prevail, which are generally dirty sinks of vice and immorality.

Rotherham.—The committee of the Rotherham and Masbro' Mechanics' Institute and Public Rooms met on Friday last week before last, for the selection of tenders forwarded for the projected institution. The number of tenders received was twenty-six, including those for the various building branches of the erection, which the committee had divided. The following are the names of the successful candidates, with the prices of their contracts:—Mr.

William Wood, bricklayers' and stone work, 645*l.*; Mr. Thomas Whittaker, joiners' and carpenters' work, 670*l.*; Mr. J. W. Marsh, slating, 56*l.* 12*s.*; Mr. James Bennett, plumber and glazier, 90*l.*; Mr. Edward Taylor, plasterer, 126*l.* 19*s.*; Mr. John Jessop, painting, 20*l.* 12*s.*

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—During a recent cleaning and beautifying of the ancient church of St. Andrew, carried out by Mr. Jackson, the south transept has been further enriched by the insertion of a monumental window of stained glass, executed and presented by Mr. Wailles, who is a townsman of Newcastle, as most of our readers know. The window was one of those exhibited in London last year. The designs are commemorative of the decease of four children, and point to the faith and resignation which such bereavements are calculated to inspire.

Southsea.—The testimonial to Lord Fred. Fitzclarence has been commenced from Mr. Truefit's design. It is to be executed in Portland stone, and, with the lamps, will cost 172*l.* We have received a litho-tint of it, which leads us to recommend this process to architects, as enabling them to show their designs with effect, with much less labour than in lithography. A brush, pen, or stump may be used.

Edinburgh.—The City Paving Board's accounts for the past year are as follows:—The produce of the assessments amounted to 7,360*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.*; sum levied as causeway mail, 826*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*; contributions received from private parties in aid of construction or repair of roads, 1,696*l.* 6*s.* 1*d.*; sum debited as interest, 143*l.* 15*s.* 5*d.*; total, 10,027*l.* 4*s.* 11*d.* Under head of "Discharge," the balance at end of 1851 was stated at 618*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*; expenditure, 7,411*l.* 14*s.* 11*d.*; interest, 243*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*; total, 8,273*l.* 3*s.* 11*d.* A return showed the expense laid out by the board on each street respectively, including new materials, implements, and repairs, &c. from 13th May, 1851, to 10th May, 1852. The total sum was 5,335*l.* 14*s.* 10*d.*; the amount of dressed stones, 7,806 tons, of mashed rubble, 3,391 tons.—Under the heading "Progress of Plate Glass," the *Scottish Press* says that a fishmonger in George-street "has been making extensive excavations opposite his premises. Splendid ice-houses, 60 feet long; large apartments for washing, cleaning, and dressing the fish; extensive cellars for feeding oysters on the London system, 500,000 at a time. The diggings under the street disclosed a fine fossil, a petrified Scotch fir, about 9 feet long, and an immense spring of hard water, an auxiliary for washing fish which far surpasses the Crawley. The shops, it is said, will, when opened, surpass everything of the kind in Britain. Mr. Anderson intends having four of them on the same improved system; fish, flesh, fowl, game, and fruit being displayed; and a frontage of plate glass of 120 feet."

Glasgow.—At the new Victoria Bridge at Stockwell-street the piers are completed, with one exception, and there will soon be no exception, for although the foundation of the fourth pier is just laid, it is expected that the pier will be completed within a week, and be ready for supporting the arches to be sprung from it. The centering for two of the arches has been put up. It consists of eleven ribs of 12-inch timbers covered with planks 5 inches thick, each rib resting on four strong piles 25 feet long. The foundations of the piers are deeper than was at first intended, being 3 feet beneath the foundations of the Broomielaw Bridge. The stones used for the piers from the foundations to the springers are of immense size: many of the springers are of 5 tons' weight. The material is of freestone, but every part of the fabric which, when completed, will meet the eye, is of granite, brought from Kingston, near Dublin.

RESTORING THE FIBRE OF BRITLED IRON RAILS.—M. Gervoy, of Lyons, a director of the railway there, has taken out an English patent for prolonging the durability of such rails, by taking them up, submitting them to heat, and replacing them on the line.

THE "CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN" A MISNOMER, AS APPLIED TO THE PAINTING BY MURILLO FROM THE SOUL GALLERY.

A NEOLACT, easily explained as regards this country, but most unaccountable in those which have consented to remain under the religious sway of the Roman Church, which clings with tenacity to legendary lore, has induced a carelessness in the identification of the early pictorial language of our religion which it should be the constant endeavour of the archæologist, or iconologist, to remove. Few subjects yielded such a glorious field to the mediæval artist, or afforded such pleasure to the spectator, as the pictorial history, not only of our Saviour, but also of those who were destined to be immediately connected with his advent, and few subjects have been, by the modern archæologist, so lightly studied. Hence the numerous errors which have arisen from misconception, in the first place, and next from the actual translation of the personages of the Old and New Writ into the rulers and characters of more modern times. The public have thus accepted the transformation of Solomon into Cloris, Rachel or Sarah into Clotilda, and David into Hugues Capet, as may be seen at St. Denis, or in the Museum of Versailles, and in numerous similar instances in various European cathedrals. Analogous misconceptions of the appropriate and recognised treatment of various Scriptural subjects have likewise plunged the iconologist into errors, one of which it is the purpose of this communication to rectify.

The Eastern as well as the Western churches delighted in the complete development of the history of the mother of Christ. The subjects were thus classed:—"The Conception of the Virgin" formed the first of the series in representations of her history, and in this subject Anna, the mother of Mary, occupies the principal place: "The Birth of the Virgin" follows; then "The Benediction;" "Her Entry into the Temple;" "Joseph introducing the Virgin before the Holy of Holies," where she is blessed by Zachariah; "The Death of the Virgin;" "Her Entombment;" "The Assumption;" "The Fountain of Life" and Coronation."

"The Annunciation," "The Salutation," and "The Nativity," formed part of the series in the pictorial history of Christ. "The Marriage of the Virgin" is a subject introduced by the Western church alone.

In the manuscript from Mount Athos, which is a summary of the iconography of the ages previous to the eleventh century, the "Conception of the Virgin" is, by ecclesiastical ordinances, thus to be represented:—In the midst of a garden, surrounded by varied foliage, St. Anna is at prayer: an angel is placed in the heavens in the act of benediction. Joachim is seen upon a mount outside the garden, also in the act of prayer and receiving benediction.—In the treatment of this subject by the Western church, this scene takes place in an apartment. In the East the habits of life are in accordance with the former mode of representation, and the garden is preferred to the interior. This is evidently the only means of portraying the subject of the "Conception of the Virgin."

The "Assumption of the Virgin," however, formed the favourite subject for the pencil or chisel of the religious artists. An apocryphal poem, ascribed to John the Evangelist himself, the patron saint of the artists, formed the theme which they developed in their works. In the thirteenth century Jacobus, a Voragine, whose "Golden Legend" formed a text-book to artists, states that the assumption of the Virgin was in his time preached from the pulpit, and that the legend was solemnly affirmed by divers sayings of saints and religious men. To the "Golden Legend" is

* This epithet, applied to the Virgin, and which is Byzantine domestic, clears up the difficulty expressed by M. Didron and Durand in the translation of the word "Oorgospaktoos," another title given to her. M. Durand thought that the word meant "obedient." M. Didron thought it untranslatable, while M. Pittsley believed it to be a local name. The term means "the quick source, or fountain," from γοργός, active, and πηγή, a source. The legendary history of the Virgin dates, probably, from the seventh century.—R. H.